

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USCINCEUR VAHINGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0363

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS: THE PAUSE FOR
REFLECTION

REF: ROME 0268

SUMMARY: THE TIME TO REFLECT PRESIDENT LEONE GAVE THE PARTIES
BY POSTPONING HIS FORMAL CONSULTATIONS UNTIL JANUARY 12-13,
IS FILLED WITH PARTY MEETINGS, POLEMICS AND KALEIDOSCOPIIC
SPECULATION. BY MONDAY ALL MAJOR PARTIES WILL HAVE MET AND
TAKEN THEIR OPENING FORMAL POSITIONS ON A CRISIS WHICH EVERY-
ONE PUBLICLY PROCLAIMS MUST BE RESOLVED IN A HURRY, BUT WHICH
MOST INFORMED OPINION EXPECTS TO BE LONG AND DIFFICULT. NO
HARD INDICATIONS ON HOW IT WILL DEVELOP BEYOND THE PRESIDEN-
TIAL CONSULTATIONS HAVE YET EMERGED. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE
CURRENT POSITIONS OF THE MAJOR PARTIES FOLLOWS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PSI - THE SOCIALISTS DIRECTORATE IS MEETING YET AGAIN

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TODAY TO APPROVE ITS ECONOMIC COUNTER-PACKAGE TO THE GOVERN-

MENT PROPOSALS IT FOUND SO OBJECTIONABLE. IT CONFIRMED YES-TERDAY THAT THE PSI WILL HOLD ITS CONGRESS AS SCHEDULED, FEBRUARY 4-8, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE CRISIS IS STILL UNRESOLVED, AND FIXED THE SITE FOR ROME. PRESSED TO CLARIFY THEIR DEMAND FOR A GOVERNMENT WHICH DOES NOT PREJUDICIALLY EXCLUDE "THE PCI CONTRIBUTION," SOCIALIST SPOKESMEN ARE GIVING IT VARYING INTERPRETATIONS FROM ONE NOT UNLIKE ZACCAGNINI'S CONFRONTO, THROUGH SUPPORT CHanneled EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH THE PSI, TO A GENERAL PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT WITH THE PCI. AT THIS STAGE THE SOCIALISTS ARE FEELING THE COLDNESS OF ISOLATION, DUE IN NO LITTLE MEASURE TO THE FAILURE OF THE UNION LEADERSHIP AND THE PCI TO SUPPORT THEM.

2. DC DIRECTORATE IS MEETING LATE AFTERNOON, JANUARY 9, TO FORMULATE PARTY POSITION ON CRISIS. DC SOURCES EXPECT PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI TO GIVE NON-POLEMICAL BUT NEGATIVE REPLY TO SOCIALIST DEMAND FOR COMMUNIST ASSOCIATION IN SOME MANNER WITH GOVERNING MAJORITY. ZACCAGNINI EXPECTED TO CALL FOR ACCORD WITH PSI BASED IN SOME FASHION ON EXISTING FOUR-PARTY MAJORITY IN ORDER TO AVOID THREAT OF EARLY ELECTIONS. DC CAN BE EXPECTED TO BEND OVER BACKWARDS TO APPEAR FORTHCOMING IN ATTEMPTS TO REACH AGREEMENT SO THAT, IF NEGOTIATIONS FAIL, BLAME FOR EARLY ELECTIONS CAN BE PINNED ON PSI.

3. PCI ATTITUDES -

(A) THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY'S DIRECTORATE WENT INTO SESSION THE MORNING OF JANUARY 9 TO DISCUSS THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE WAKE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION. THE DIRECTORATE IS STILL IN SESSION AND ALL THAT IS PRESENTLY KNOWN IS THE FACT THAT PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER HAS PRESENTED AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL SCENE.

(B) IN ANTICIPATION OF THE PUBLICATION OF A FORMAL STATEMENT AT THE END OF THE DIRECTORATE SESSION, WE WOULD SPECULATE THAT THE PARTY WILL FOLLOW THE LINE TO WHICH IT HAS ADHERED SINCE THE ERUPTION OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE APPEARANCE OF DEMARTINO'S AVANTI EDITORIAL DECEMBER 31.

(C) AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE PCI'S ARGUMENT WILL BE ITS EX-CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESSURE OF A NEED TO ACT RESPONSIBLY IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL WELFARE WHEN THE COUNTRY IS IN THE MIDST OF SEVERE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. THE PCI UNDOUBTEDLY WILL URGE AN EARLY END TO THE CRISIS, AND THE END OF GOVERNMENTAL PARALYSIS, AND WILL STATE THAT IT IS PREPARED TO MAKE WHATEVER CONTRIBUTION IT CAN TOWARD THIS GOAL. AT THE SAME TIME THE PCI LEADERSHIP WILL IN ALL LIKELIHOOD REITERATE ITS OPPOSITION TO EARLY ELECTIONS. FINALLY, THE DIRECTORATE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CHIDE BOTH THE PSI

AND THE DC FOR POLICIES AND POSITIONS BOTH HAVE TAKEN IN THE PAST WHICH HAVE LED TO THE CURRENT SITUATION.

4. THE PSDI DIRECTORATE MEETING, JANUARY 9, ENDED WITH THE NEAR UNANIMOUS REJECTION OF EARLY ELECTIONS AND A CALL FOR RECONSTITUTION OF A FOUR PARTY CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE ANY ASSOCIATION OF THE PCI TO THE MAJORITY, BUT ALSO "ANY IRRATIONAL PRECLUSION." WORDING KEYED TO MOST TENUOUS INTERPRETATION OF PSI'S CONDITION REGARDING PCI, AND PROPOSAL IS IN ESSENCE CALL FOR RETURN TO CLASSIC CENTER-LEFT, BUT WITH A "CONSTRUCTIVE CONFRONTO" TOWARD THE PCI. VOLPE

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